Social Questions

BULLETIN

of the Methodist Federation for Social Service (unofficial), an organization which rejects the method of the struggle for profit as the economic base for society; which seeks to replace it with social-economic planning in order to develop a society without class distinctions and privileges.

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National Defense

The adoption of the national defense program marks a turning point in the history of this nation. Production for war is now the basic element in our economy. National defense is the controlling factor in our political activities. The Selective Service Act, with its combination of conscription and compulsory military training before we are actually engaged in war, puts our national life on a military basis. The legislation authorizing the President to call the National Guard into active service at his discretion, and the States to organize Home Guards without the legal restraints surrounding the National Guard, exposes our democracy to new perils. These facts constitute a challenge to that section of Protestant Christianity whose conviction it is that the democratic way of life is a collective expression of the basic principles of the gospel in relation to both personality and society. The situation calls for constant analysis, and for criticism and opposition where these are needed. There is immediate need to raise certain questions concerning the defense program.

IS IT EFFICIENT?

Granting the necessity of adapting our national defense to the conditions of mechanized warfare, and the aims of Hitler and his axis partners, the first question is whether the present program meets the need. The record shows an element of surprise. The report of a Hearing of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs last May shows that the General Staff saw then no need for anything like a $15,000,000,000 program of defense. Also there was authoritative testimony that with adequate naval and air forces, supported by a relatively small and highly mechanized army, this country could not be invaded. The present combination of universal military training and conscription was not in sight.

H. G. Wells recently informed us that we need to learn quickly from the recent experience of France and England that war is no longer a military operation. He meant that it is also economic—blockade of, or access to, essential materials; volume of industrial production; and psychological—a battle of propaganda. Where are the signs in our present program that either our military or political leaders understand the importance of this fact?

At the moment war in Western Europe is purely a contest in destruction from the air and economic blockade. This would plainly be the nature of a defensive war for the United States. Because of our geographic situation, the line between defensive and aggressive operations is more clearly drawn for us than for nations less favorably situated. This is why our younger strategists limit our defense needs to adequate air and naval forces, and a comparatively small, highly mechanized, land force. Their followers are asking whether the present partial mobilization is merely repeating the outdated tactics of the World War and registering the tragic incapacity of the Brass Hats to keep up with the changing times. Certainly it is the democratic duty of American citizens to demand an intelligent working plan for meeting the national emergency, and to insist on being fully and frankly told how many men are to be trained and in what ways. To repeat the authenticated waste of human life in the last war from stupid tactics would be an unpardonable crime.

The relation of labor standards, civil liberties, health and housing to efficient national defense will be discussed in later bulletins.

IS IT DEFENSE?

The question of efficiency in any military program depends upon its objectives. One kind of army is required for operations in Europe, or Asia; another for the defense of the United States with its dependencies; still another for hemisphere defense. Therefore the question is where are the boys now going to camp, and those to follow them, to be used? So far neither they nor their parents have been told anything definite. We know as much, and as little, about the objectives of our National Defense policy as the people of England know about the war aims of their Government.

The announcements have all been in general terms of the danger of the world aims of Hitler and his partners, accompanied at first by quite unfounded statements about how easily our inland cities could be bombed. The latest Presidential statement is that none of the boys going to camp will be used in a foreign war, that their mere training will remove the threat to our peace and safety. There is no warrant in history for either of these statements. Its course runs to the contrary.

Military and naval strategy must of course theoretically prepare to meet all potential enemies. But the American people are now paying for a defense program to meet a particular situation. They should therefore demand that it live up to its claims and specifications. No one has yet made a factual case for the present expenditures and mobilization. No one has shown why the mechanized forces necessary for actual defense could not be secured without conscription, by offering the same

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compensation that the capacities required for it could get in civil life, and by guaranteeing that it would be used for no other purpose.

Without any examination of alternatives, under the fears of the moment, the American people have been led into universal military training, and conscription, dressed up by advertising technique with the title "Selective Service." Meanwhile the Army is reported to be ordering supplies for a much larger force than the announced training plan calls for. At no time is it clear how much of the program is to help England, and how much to defend this nation. At times they are said to be an identical self-interest, at times to be in conflict. It is reported in Washington that high officials in the Navy objected to the transfer of destroyers to England.

The record of history, reinforced by our unemployment situation, makes it clear that the boys now being trained will not be demobilized without being used somewhere. On this point the talk in certain circles always gets around to labor and Latin America. Underneath this whole situation is the fact that if capitalism continues, our economic imperialism is the legitimate heir of British imperialism, certainly in this hemisphere. Hemisphere Defense includes keeping the Nazis, or the British, or both, from getting the trade and exploiting the resources of Latin America.

IS IT DEMOCRATIC?

In the nature of the case a program which is to prove itself adequate to defend a democratic nation must be democratically adopted. It is not sufficient that it be adopted by democratic forms. These are now being used in a considerable part of this nation, through the Poll Tax system, to enforce the undemocratic control of the majority by a minority. They are also being used in Washington to rush through anti-democratic legislation without democratic discussion. For a defense program to be democratic the people must choose its objectives; they must approve its general features; they must be able to control its general policies.

None of these conditions were met in the adoption of our present program. At several points, as in the transfer of destroyers to England and the acquisition of naval bases, discussion was deliberately avoided on the plea that the democratic procedure was dangerously slow. The delegation from the American Peace Mobilization that went to Washington to express opposition to the Selective Service Act was prevented from carrying any banners or wearing anti-war buttons; its prayer-meeting on the White House steps was broken up by force. These illegal and anti-democratic actions were admitted in court by the Government and, as a condition of dismissing the case against them, the Washington authorities bound themselves not to repeat these offenses.

Certainly the composition of the Draft Boards is not democratic. Strong protests have gone to Washington from the labor organizations in Michigan and Ohio, against the predominance of employers, and the presence of anti-labor employers, on the Boards. The Washington, D. C. Board contains the name of a prominent anti-labor attorney who served as counsel to the Smith Committee in its attack upon the N.L.R.B. In New York City the War Department was persuaded to abrogate a rule of the last war that members of the Draft Boards must reside in their respective districts. This was particularly in order that a district populated heavily by negroes and Porto Ricans, where there is heavy unemployment, could be given a Draft Board from the "upper classes."

The economic pressure of the draft brings to light the anti-democratic features of capitalism. Employers are asked to list employees who can be spared. This is an opportunity to get rid of "trouble makers." While businessmen are being guaranteed their profits, and protected against loss from plant expansion, there is no guarantee of jobs for the men who go to camp. Already employers are declining to take the risk of filling vacancies with men of draft age.

Against these facts sermons of preachers, rabbis and priests, about the democratic nature of conscription, appear as illusory rationalizations. Universal training and service can be democratic when democratically adopted for democratic chosen ends. But ours was not so installed and is not being democratically operated. Vain also are pulpit hopes that army training will make for democracy. Out of the last war it produced the American Legion, which in several annual reports of the Civil Liberties Union has been listed as the chief repressive agency in the nation. Our army is run on the basis of class distinctions which are not recognized elsewhere in American life, and from which even the Nazis have broken away. (See *This Man's Army* by Malcolm Cowley, "New Republic," Sept. 23, 1940).

Those who believe it to be a Christian duty to extend and defend democracy will call for elimination of undemocratic aspects of the defense program. Some will support the demand for repeal of the Selective Service Act; others will work for its amendment, making the compulsory features applicable only to actual engagement in war, and providing meantime for the necessary defense force on a voluntary basis, with sufficient remuneration to make it as attractive as civil employment.

A FATAL WEAKNESS

We now know that a fatal weakness of France was the connections with Nazi Germany, of men in high places, both political and financial, and their desire for fascist controls upon the people of France. Recently some of our papers and magazines have been unfolding the record of similar connections and sympathies in this country on the part of men who now play an important role in our national defense program. General Motors, Ford, the DuPonts, have heavy investments and large industrial operations under Axis powers. They all have a record of opposition to a democratic labor policy and sympathy with what Fascism has done. General Motors controls the biggest auto plant in Germany—The Adam Opel. They got 80% of the stock for $30,000,000, and it is now worth over $100,000,000. Since 1933 this plant has been mostly making trucks for Hitler. The American owners got $36,000,000 profit in ten years, most of which they were not allowed to withdraw. The General Motors have already invested another $20,000,000 in Nazi Germany. (Poor's Manual.) William S. Knudson, of General Motors, head of the Defense Commission, said in April, 1938, that Hitler Germany was "the miracle of the twentieth century." Henry Ford received from Hitler

the medal awarded to "distinguished foreigners who have deserved well of the Reich." What kind of defense in the end will such people give us? Their financial interests lead inevitably towards appeasement. They are now against Hitler, but not against Hitlerism.

HELPING THE ENEMY

More important than the role of any individuals is the economic aid that has gone from this country to Germany and Italy, and now goes to Japan. The early record is in the reports of the Nye Committee, beginning with the sale of 7,000 Thompson sub-machine guns to Hitler, in his street fighting days, and going on to the sale of aircraft equipment with the knowledge of the Army and Navy authorities. All this is confirmed by testimony of Secretary of the Navy Knox before the Committee on Naval Affairs last July. Along with this goes the financial help that was given to Hitler, directly and indirectly, by our bankers.

In all this we followed the record of England and France. Paul Einzig, foreign editor of the "Financial News in World Finance," 1938-39, says, "Practically the whole of the free exchange available to Germany for the purchase of raw materials was supplied directly by the British government."

The London *Evening Standard* for August 21, 1939, reports that France sent bauxite and other materials for armament to Germany right up to the eve of the war; that "only 13 days before the declaration 17,000 tons of rubber, 8,000 tons of copper and large quantities of tin and lead were furnished by Britain to Germany. To execute the orders in time, heavy withdrawals were made from stores in the United Kingdom. A third of our stocks of rubber and a quarter of our supplies of nickel have gone and are on their way to Germany."

Without our sales Hitler could never have built up his air force. Our engines and our parts became the models for the new German air industry. The New York *Post,* June 5, 1940, summarized the war supplies we have sold to Germany, Italy, and Japan. In 1931 we sent 2,176 tons of scrap iron and steel to Italy; by 1939 the figure had reached 425,896 tons. In 1935 Germany took only 4,113 tons of American scrap, in 1938 she got 230,903 tons. In March 1940 she got none, but we sent 48,258 tons to Italy, more than previous average monthly totals to both those nations. In the six months before Italy entered the war our export of cotton to her doubled. Part of these supplies, of course, went to Germany.

The story is repeated in the case of Japan, to whom in 1931 we sent 48,036 tons of scrap metal; in 1939 the figure reached 2,016,065 tons. That was the year we had to keep our fleet in the Pacific in order to protect ourselves against the Japanese fleet. About two weeks ago the State Department agreed that cutting off oil would paralyze Japan's fleet after the present two and a half months' supply was exhausted. Of her annual requirements of thirty to thirty-five million barrels, she has been getting from twenty-five to twenty-eight million from the United States. On October 21st the press reported that Japan signed contracts in California for five million barrels of oil. For the first eight months of this year our American war exports to Japan increased by $12,000,000. The total included about $25,000,000 worth of oil, $11,000,000 for iron scrap, and $29,000,000 for cotton.

The American people were misled about an embargo on gas to Japan. For several months after they thought it was on there was only a licensing system, and the customs reports show that licenses were still being issued. Then on July 31st the President put an embargo on the high octane gas used for aircraft. But the low grade gas is still being shipped. The embargo on scrap covers only the number one grade. We are still shipping other grades, also sheet steel, oil, and copper. (See "The Nation," Oct. 26, p. 390.) At the same time we consider the danger in the Pacific so serious that we arranged to bring home several thousands of our citizens. Obviously a policy which merely adopts a military program to meet an enemy whom our economic program enables to fight us is not adequate national defense.

WAR ECONOMY

This situation is inherent in the nature and workings of the profit-seeking economy. It must have profits, it must seek new markets. These it finds today in war production. So it arms first the enemies, and then the defenders of democracy. How are we to use later the plants that produce 50,000 planes a year which Roosevelt promises? Either they are to be used for more war or there is more unemployment. The capitalist economy now depends upon the production of the means of death to keep itself going. Here is the basic challenge to those whose gospel of more abundant life is always for tomorrow, and finds the meaning of today only in relation to the future. What future is there for the people of the United States or the world, unless they deal with their present danger in such a way as to remove the menace of an economy that takes them down the road to death?

HARRY F. WARD.

News from the Field

Northwest Iowa Conference, September, 1940. Excerpts from the report of the Conference Federation Unit:

"The Church cannot afford to leave laboring men outside its fold, and if it is largely ignorant of the laboring man's problems, his hopes and fears, it cannot hope to reach his heart and religious alliances."

"Year by year, the Church reaffirms its interest in labor —and the right of labor to organize, but it has done little to educate its members in any systematic way on the needs or the meaning of labor organizations. Such education would increase the number of members who are sympathetic toward labor unions. We call upon the Church to educate its members into an understanding of the problems of a great group of industrial workers."

"In this time of war hysteria, we urge the Church to bestir itself in the protection of helpless minorities. . . . The Church must speak out in the protection of innocent persons who may be labeled as spies by whispering campaigns and witch-hunts, lest there be injustices again, as in the World War days, when many good citizens were vilified simply because they were of foreign extraction."

"These evils must not be repeated. . . . Christian tolerance and understanding should be a bulwark against lies and persecution."

Order Now

Harry F. Ward's latest book, *"Democracy and Social Change,"* Modern Age. Price $2.50 plus 3c postage.

"At a time when democracy in America is threatened from within and without, Professor Ward . . . comes forward with a message that every man and woman of good will will want to read."

The book can be secured through the Federation office by sending $1.53 plus at least a $1.00 membership in our organization.

F. Ernest Johnson's "The Social Gospel Re-examined," Harpers, 49 E. 33rd Street, New York, N. Y. $2.

James Myers' "Do You Know Labor?", National Home Library Foundation, Washington, D. C. Price 55c.

Federation Conference

December 6 and 7. The Riverside Church, Riverside Drive at 122nd Street, New York, N. Y.

Eastern Fall Conference, called by our Federation and the United Christian Council for Democracy—the organization that unites the Methodist Federation for Social Service with the (Episcopal) Church League for Industrial Democracy, and with other social action groups among the Presbyterians, Unitarians, Baptists, Evangelicals and Congregationalists.

Conference purpose: To discuss how Christians in the United States can defend the democratic rights and the living standards of the American people.

Program: Friday, Dec. 6, 10:30 to 11:30 A.M. Registration, Claremont Avenue entrance to the Church.

11:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Fellowship Meetings of the Federation and of the other organizations in the U. C. C. D.

12:30 to 2:00 P.M. Luncheon, Upper Refectory, 100 Claremont Avenue. Speaker—Rev. John Paul Jones (Pres. Presbyterian Fellowship for Social Action). Subject—"The Rights of Conscientious Objectors."

2:30 to 3:30 P.M. Afternoon Session, Riverside Church. Speaker—Rev. Charles C. Webber (Secretary M. F. S. S.). Subject—"The Rights of Labor."

4:00 to 5:30 P.M. Riverside Church. Speaker—Rev. William B. Spofford (Secretary Church League for Industrial Democracy). Subject—"Wages and Hours."

6:00 to 7:30 P.M. Dinner, Upper Refectory, 100 Claremont Avenue. Speaker—Rev. Dwight J. Bradley (Director Council for Social Action of the Congregational and Christian Churches). Subject—"The Defense of the Health and of the Housing of the People."

8:00 to 9:30 P.M. Evening Session. Riverside Church. Speaker—Dr. Harry F. Ward. Subject—"The Future of Democracy."

Program: Saturday, Dec. 7. 9:00 to 10:30 A.M. Riverside Church. Meetings of the Federation and of the other organizations.

10:30 to 11:30 A.M. Morning Session of the U. C. C. D., Riverside Church. Speaker—Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr. Subject—"Defense of Living Standards."

11:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Report of the Findings Committee. Discussion and recommendations for action.

1:00 to 2:30 P.M. Luncheon, Upper Refectory, 100 Claremont Avenue. Speaker—Bishop Francis J. McConnell. Subject — "The Rights of Minority Political Groups to Express Themselves."

Conference Information: Registration Fee 50c. Notify Charles C. Webber, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y., as to the number of meals desired. He will send you information as to reasonable accommodations for the night of Dec. 6.

The Mail Bag

Bishop Edgar Blake writes: "Personally I feel the Federation was never more needed than today. The Church and the country as a whole need to be awakened to the danger of the anti-social forces. Unless this is done it is a dark outlook before us. I cannot think we will fail in this crisis."

Kenneth Leslie, Editor, *Protestant Digest:*. "The work of your Federation . . . is in my opinion one of the most important spear-head projects in the American battle for social regeneration."

Ballot Results

One hundred and twenty-four of our members have indicated their complete approval of the proposed 1940-41 Federation program as set forth in the October Bulletin. They sent a total of $166 with their ballots.

Four members have disapproved various specific items. Only one member has sent in a complete disapproval.

Thirty-five members have promised to increase their contributions in 1940, while seventy-seven have stated that they will renew their memberships when due.

Twenty-eight are trying to secure new members, and fifty-one have expressed a willingness to write or see nearby delinquent members.

Important! If you have not sent in your ballot from the October Bulletin please do so at once. We need your judgment and your assistance.

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